

DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON KIDS

A Guide to Dealing With Feelings of Stress

STRESS: constraining force or influence: as a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation. (from merriam-webster.com)

STRESS...SO MUCH FOR THE INNOCENCE OF YOUTH! The world of a child of divorce is marked by stress. Studies show that children of divorce have higher stress levels than their friends in intact families. In fact, studies show that the divorce of one's parents is the second most stressful thing a child can experience (second only to death of a parent). In a day and age where children are already stressed out, divorce exacerbates the stress which children already experience and adds its own set of stressors. Children are faced with the stress of living in two different homes, changing schools, the loss of extended family members, economic turmoil and constant worry about whether or not even basic needs will be met. This stress can be further intensified by well-meaning adults who seek to shelter children from the effects of the grieving process. This effort can confuse the child as they wrestle with their grief and cause additional stress. This stress leads to physical ailments, poor academic performance and, in some cases, suicide and often lasts well into adulthood.

"Children's view of divorce is unambiguous: it's a disaster. In 1988, professor Jeanne Disel-Lewis surveyed almost 700 junior high school students, asking them to rate a number of life events in terms of stressfulness. The only thing students ranked as more stressful than parental divorce was death of a parent or close family member. Parental divorce received a higher rating than the death of a friend, being "physically hit" by a parent, feeling that no one liked them, or being seriously injured." Karl Zinsmeister Divorce Harms Children

CAUSES OF STRESS AFTER DIVORCE

- Less consistent parenting
- Economic changes
- Withdrawal of a parent from the child's life
- Family transitions including remarriage & cohabitation
- Dealing with family events where both parents will be attending
- Uncertainty about basic needs
- Exposure to continued conflict between parents
- Changing homes and schools
- Parental depression
- Changing relationships with friends and extended family members

SIGNS OF STRESS IN A CHILD

- ✓ Crying
- ✓ Problems sleeping
- ✓ Gastrointestinal problems
- ✓ Nightmares
- ✓ Aggression
- ✓ Clinginess
- ✓ Moodiness
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Fussiness
- ✓ Problems gaining weight
- ✓ Excessive weight gain
- ✓ Developmental delays
- ✓ Regression
- ✓ Changes in eating habits
- ✓ Withdrawal



Scripture References About Stress

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|-------------|-------------|
| Ps 34:10 | Mt 6:25-34 |
| Ps 37:5 | Mt 11:28-30 |
| Ps 37:25 | Jn 14:27 |
| Ps 55:2 | Jn 16:33 |
| Ps 103:1-5 | Rm 8:6 |
| Pr 16:3 | Rm 8:37 |
| Is 40:28-31 | Rm 16:20 |
| Is 55:1-3 | 1 Cor 3:11 |
| Jer 17:7 | Gal 6:9 |
| Jer 29:11 | Ph 4:6-9 |
| Hb 3:17-19 | 1 Pt 5:6-7 |
| Mal 4:2 | 1 Jn 4:4 |



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